



WASHINGTON LOW INCOME
Housing Alliance

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Building Changes

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City of Seattle Department of
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Liz Trautman
YouthCare

Steve Walker
City of Seattle Office of Housing

Lisa Wolters
Seattle Housing Authority

Linda Worthington
Schroeter Goldmark & Bender

*Organizations listed for
identification purposes only.*

October 9, 2015

Victoria Wachino, Director
Center for Medicaid and CHIP Services
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services
200 Independence Avenue Southwest
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Director Wachino:

On behalf of the Washington Low Income Housing Alliance, I am writing to express our strong support for the Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit proposed in Washington State's 1115 Medicaid Transformation Waiver application.

The Housing Alliance advocates for public policies that ensure all people have access to safe, healthy, and affordable homes. Our coalition is comprised of over 140 member organizations and government entities representing every region of Washington State. Our network includes supportive housing providers, non-profit supportive housing developers, supportive housing funders, people living in supportive housing, and behavioral health providers.

The inclusion of a Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit in the 1115 waiver application creates a tremendous opportunity for Washington to bring this evidence-based best practice fully to scale. A strong body of local and national data has demonstrated that supportive housing is effective in helping people who are chronically homeless and have serious behavioral and/or physical health disabilities to access and retain permanent housing and uninterrupted, appropriate levels of health services. This intervention leads to housing stability, positive health outcomes, and improved utilization of health and social services.

These proven outcomes result in significant savings to public systems, including Medicaid, that often exceed the cost of providing supportive housing. However, lack of funding for the intensive housing services that are critical to the model's success hinder its expansion. We believe the proposed benefit included in the waiver application will help make the expansion of this intervention feasible in Washington State.

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Washington is well poised to successfully implement this benefit. Our state is home to innovative supportive housing organizations that are nationally recognized for their leadership and expertise in delivering supportive housing services. The Housing Alliance and other supportive housing stakeholders are eager to continue working closely with Washington's Health Care Authority and Department of Social and Health Services to design and implement a supportive housing benefit.

We believe that the proposed Supportive Housing Medicaid benefit complements the broader goals of the Healthier Washington Initiative and Washington's 1115 waiver application. If approved by CMS, such a benefit will create significant Medicaid savings while ensuring people with serious disabilities experience improved health outcomes and are able to live with security, autonomy and dignity in their own communities.

Thank you for your consideration of this important proposal, and please feel free to contact me directly if you have any questions about our comments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Rachael Myers", written on a light gray rectangular background.

Rachael Myers, Executive Director
Washington Low Income Housing Alliance